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Religious Intolerance

NO PART OF THE
GENERAL PLAN
EITHER OF THE
Mosaic, or Christian Dispensation,

PROVED BY
Scriptural Inferences and Deductions,
AFTER A
METHOD ENTIRELY NEW.

BY JOSIAH TUCKER, D.D.
DEAN of GLOUCESTER.

GLOUCESTER:
PRINTED BY R. RAIKES,
AND SOLD IN LONDON BY
RIVINGTON, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD; T. CADDE,
IN THE STRAND; AND J. WALTER, NEAR CHARING
CROSS.
M.DCC.LXXIV.



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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.


 HE following Dissertation, which undertakes to prove, That Idolatry itself might be tolerated, not only under the mild Dispensation of the Gospel, but, in *certain Respects*, even under the severe Law of *Moses*,—is published at this Juncture in Order to present the Reader with a *new* and *curious*, and at the same Time with a very cogent Argument in Favour of **U N I V E R S A L T O L E R A T I O N**. The Dissertation itself, as may be easily perceived, is only a Part of a more comprehensive Work for elucidating the Holy Scriptures, which is getting ready with as much Dispatch as is consistent with the Author's other Avocations.

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HAD the Dissenting Ministers prosecuted their Intention of applying to Parliament this Sessions, for Relief against the penal Laws now hanging over their Heads,—this present Tract would have been preceded by a large prefatory Discourse, setting forth the mistaken Policy of penal Laws of any Kind against Ecclesiastical Non-conformity, and the particular Detriment and Disgrace which the Church of *England* now sustains in various Instances by the Continuance of such Laws.

FROM hence Occasion would have been taken to have animadverted on the Inconsistency of *too many* among the *Protestant* Dissenters in this Respect; who, at the very Instant they are soliciting to have their own Necks freed from what they esteem the galling Yoke of a Church-Test and penal Laws, are yet some of the greatest Zealots for continuing the *same* on the Necks of such other Dissenters from the national Establishment, as do not come under the Denomination of *Protestants*. Whereas their sole Aim,

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in a religious View, ought to have been, To have petitioned for an *absolute Repeal of the penal Laws against Non-conformity*, 'leaving it to the Wisdom of the Legislature to determine, what, or whether any, *Civil Test* were necessary, in order to ensure 'the *Civil Obedience of the Subject*.' But, as it is to be hoped, that the Protestant Dissenters will themselves see this capital Error, and rectify it in their next Application to Parliament, the intended Prefatory Discourse is withdrawn for the present.

IN the mean Time, the candid and judicious Reader is desired to bear always in Mind, That the present Question is,—not what Securities for Soundness of Doctrine, or Purity of Faith, each Church has a Right to require of its own Members, and more especially of its Ministers,---but what Tests of Orthodoxy has any Church, or any religious Society, a Right to demand of those, who renounce its Communion, and declare themselves to be separate from, and independent of, it? These two Questions are widely different, and ought never

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never to be confounded: Yet all those, who plead for removing religious Tests, and penal Laws, from one Species of Dissentients, while they wish to have them continued on another, do actually confound these different Questions: Therefore they certainly have not that *Fullness* of Right to complain of Hardship, or Ill-treatment, which they would have had, were their own Example such as could be appealed to, in Favour of UNIVERSAL TOLERATION.



AN

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A N I M U S
An Intermediate Dissertation,

M U B E I N G

A N E N Q U I R Y

Into the proper and justifiable Methods of

Propagating the Christian Religion.

—
A N

E R R A T U M.

Page 37, Line 24,--for *Dath not Persecution*,
read *Doth Persecution*.



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Intermediate Dissertation, &c.



L U K E ix. 54, 55, and 56.

Lord, wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of: For the Son of Man is not come to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them.

WE have seen in the Course of these Dissertations, how God at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets: And we have seen also, that in these last Days he hath graciously condescended to speak unto us by his

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Son. Nay more, we have observed, that every preceding Revelation was a Kind of a School-Master to bring Men to a succeeding one; and that all of them, from first to last, either mediately or immediately led to, and terminated in, the Christian. We are now therefore to enter upon a Discussion of this Christian System, the greatest and most extensive Tender of Divine Mercies that ever was made to Mankind. In Relation to which we have discovered already, that the Messiah made his Appearance in the Flesh both at the fittest Season for the Purpose, as well as at that very Juncture, when all the Predictions concerning him were to be accomplished and fulfilled. Moreover we have traced his threefold mediatorial Office of King, Priest, and Prophet, throughout every Period down to the last, when he came to execute them personally himself.

Now from a View of all this, it must necessarily follow, that a Religion of such transcendent Dignity, which was planted and established by the eternal Son of God himself;—a Religion of such vast Consequence both to the present Interest and future Happiness of Mankind, ought to be embraced by all. But, alas! we know by woeful Experience, that, considering the Multitudes of Mankind, the Number of Christians is small indeed!—And that even out of

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of this small Number, a large Portion of them strangely corrupt the Faith, and adulterate its genuine Principles; whilst a larger Portion still neglect its Rules and disobey its Precepts. What then is to be done to these ungrateful Wretches? How is the Infidel to be converted? How is the Heretic or Schismatic to be brought back to an orthodox Faith? And the mere nominal and wicked Christian to be either reclaimed or punished? — *Lord, wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven to consume them, even as Elias did?* This is certainly the Language which Passion, Resentment, and blind Zeal would first adopt. But is it the Language of the Gospel? And are we anywhere told by Christ, or his Apostles, that Fires brought down from Heaven, or Fires lit up on Earth, are the proper Instruments to be used for the Propagation of his Religion at first, or for the Conservation of it afterwards? Surely no: For our blessed Saviour in the Text directly asserts the contrary: *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of;* and then he adds in the succeeding Verse, *The Son of Man is not come to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them;* which was afterwards confirmed and illustrated by every one of his Apostles, both in their Writings and by their Actions.

BUT still an undeniable Fact it is, that *Elias* did twice command Fire to come down from

Heaven to consume the Worshippers of *Baal*.
 " And therefore why may not we execute a like
 " Vengeance (when we have the Power of do-
 " ing it) on the declared Enemies of the Gof-
 " pel? Or at least, why might not we, from
 " this Precedent, deduce an Inference to justify
 " ourselves in laying proper Curbs and Re-
 " straints on those who would pervert the Pu-
 " rity, or corrupt the Principles, of true Re-
 " ligion?" A sufficient Reply to such bold
 Questions would doubtless be this:—You have
 received no extraordinary Commission (as *Elias*
 did) from Heaven to use any such Measures.
 You are not allowed even to wish, much less to
 pray, that Fire may descend from Heaven to
 consume any Offender whatever. Much less
 are you authorised by the Gospel to light up the
 Fires of Persecution yourselves, in order to con-
 sume, or to punish those, whom you may esteem
 to be unsound in any Part of the Christian Faith.

HOWEVER, as an Instance is here produced
 in the Case of *Elias*, which seems to justify the
 Infliction of Punishment on the Score of Reli-
 gion;—and as it may be of great Service to the
 Cause of Truth to have this Circumstance tho-
 roughly and satisfactorily cleared up;—I will
 therefore enter the deeper into the Subject; and
 will endeavour to trace the Doctrine of Perse-
 cution as high as ever it can go.

Now the Question before us is plainly this ; whether Force, Violence, or Compulsion of any Kind, are prescribed in the Scriptures, as proper Means to be used by the Worshippers of the true God, either for the original Propagation, or for the subsequent Defence and Preservation of true Religion ? And as we have all along prosecuted our Inquiries by beginning from the very first Period of Religion, and then regularly descending downwards ; 'till we come to the Christian, I shall carry on the present Examination after the same Manner.

1st. THEN let it be enquired, Who, or what human Beings were commissioned to punish our first Parents for their Transgression, in eating the forbidden Fruit ?— God himself did certainly punish them by various Ways : But it doth not appear, that he commissioned any of their Sons, Grandsons, or Descendents, to sit in Judgment on their Progenitors : And most certain it is, that he did not commission the original Transgressors to become a mutual Plague and Torment to each other.

2dly. AFTER the Fall,--- Who was appointed to inflict *temporal* Punishments on the Anti-diluvian World for their manifold and gross Impieties ?---Never sure did any People more worthily deserve to be punished than they, if

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Punishment by the Hand of Man had been judged at that Juncture a proper Mode of Procedure. "For God saw that the Wickedness of Man was great in the Earth ; and that every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only evil continually : And it repented the Lord, that he had made Man on the Earth, and it grieved him at his Heart. — *Genesis vi. 5 and 6.*" But yet we do not read, that God commissioned *Noah*, or any other of the Sons of Men, to avenge his Cause, notwithstanding the manifold Provocations ; and notwithstanding it must be allowed, that this was a Measure he might as easily have taken as any other. Indeed we are told by the Apostle St. *Peter*, that the Almighty did send *Noah* among them : But with what View ? Not to inflict corporal Punishments ; not to fine or imprison ; nor to compel or confiscate ; but to *preach Righteousness* to them : That is, to warn them to forsake their evil Deeds, and to caution them to flee from the Wrath to come ;---and then, when all these persuasive Means proved ineffectual, and the Apostates remained still incorrigible ;— God himself brought the Flood to sweep away the World of the Ungodly.

3dly. A similar Observation might be made on the Conduct of Providence from the Flood 'till the Call of *Abraham*. For the World soon de-

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degenerated, and became idolatrous ; so that little or no Traces were left of the Religion of *Adam*, or the Faith and Covenant of *Noah*. And yet no human Commissioner was appointed either to punish the Reprobate, or to recall the Back-Sliders, or to restrain the wavering and inconstant by the Terror of penal Sanctions.

4thly. We find likewise, that the same System prevailed from the Call of *Abraham* 'till *Moses* : For neither *Abraham*, *Isaac*, nor *Jacob*, received any Warrant from Heaven to punish the Inhabitants of *Canaan* ; tho' the Vices and Corruptions of some of these Inhabitants were grown to such an abominable Height as to call down the immediate Vengeance of God by Fire and Brimstone in the Destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*.

WHEREFORE, 5thly. Come we now to the Mosaic Dispensation.—And here indeed we may trace out a Conduct observed by Providence, different from any of the former ; which Difference therefore ought to be examined by us with the greater Care. For this is the first Time, during the Space of almost 1500 Years, in which we find that human Agents were employed to vindicate the Honour and Glory of God, or to inflict temporal Punishments, on Account of false Notions respecting the Object
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of religious Worship. And it is very true, both that the *Israelites* were commissioned to exterminate the *Canaanites*, because of their manifold and shocking Enormities;— And also, that if any one among the *Israelites* should turn Apostate, and worship any other God, he was to be put to Death without Reprieve: Which Law concerning Apostacy was the Basis of *Elijah's* Authority in commanding Fire to come down from Heaven to confound and consume the Worshippers of *Baal*.

BUT before we come directly to this Matter, we have some previous Points to settle.

As first, it doth not appear, that the *Israelites* were commissioned to avenge the Cause of God against Idolatry in *general*, but only against the *particular Idolaters* of the Land of *Canaan*: For they only were to be exterminated. Now, had *Moses* consulted his own Feelings as a Man, or reasoned on the Case as a Patriot or a Politician; it is much more probable, that he would have fixed on the *Egyptians*, rather than on the *Canaanites*, as the properest Objects to be destroyed. For the *Egyptians*, as far as can be traced from History, were equally idolatrous with the *Canaanites*; and besides exercised the most unjustifyable Cruelties and Tyranny over the Children of *Israel*; which the *Canaanitish* Nations had

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never done. Nay more, *Moses* himself had had a personal Quarrel with the one People, and not with the other. Add to this, that the Country of *Egypt* was much more desirable in itself, with respect to Extent, Fertility, and Riches, than the Land of *Canaan* ;---not to mention that the Conquest of it, according to the Rules of human Probability, appeared to be much more feasible and expeditious. For had *Moses*, after the Overthrow of the *Ægyptians* in the Red Sea, and before the Country could be recovered from this universal Consternation,---had he, I say, returned immediately into *Egypt* with his 600,000 Men, all Opposition, humanly speaking, must have fallen before him. But it pleased the Divine Councils to order Things otherwise. The *Canaanites* were doomed to Destruction ; and had been so ever since the Days of *Abraham* ; but they were to fall by the Hand of *Man* : Whereas the *Egyptians* were to receive their Punishment immediately from *Sod* ; and each particular Plague or Punishment to be inflicted on them, as I have proved at large in a former Dissertation, was to carry along with it a striking Confutation of some particular Species of *Egyptian* Idolatry.

WHAT then, it may be asked, were the specific Reasons, which induced the supreme Being, the Judge of all the Earth, to distinguish

the seven Nations of *Canaan*, equally idolatrous, and perhaps not much less immoral, by a Punishment so very singular, and at the same Time so very terrible?—Reasons undoubtedly there were, just and good, weighty and important; and which perhaps, one Time or other, may be discovered by us, or revealed to us, together with the whole State of the Case respecting both this Life and a future. But in the mean while, we must rest satisfied with our Ignorance: For who hath known the Will of the Lord? Or who hath been his Counsellor? And it is sufficient for us to learn at present, that even in Cases where all are found to be equally guilty, some may be marked out as the Objects either of present Justice, or of Mercy, more conspicuously than others: For were it not so, there would hardly be any Room in many Cases for shewing present Examples either of Justice, or of Mercy. So that our Saviour's Reasoning in the Case of the *Galileans*, seems to be particularly apposite to our present Purpose,

“ Suppose ye that these *Galileans* were Sinners above all the *Galileans*, because they suffered such Things? I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

WHEREFORE, 2dly. another Proof, that the Command to extirpate the Worshippers of false Gods, was only a partial one, and never intended to

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be a general Rule, may be drawn from the Case of Strangers sojourning in any of the Coasts of *Israel*. Indeed it was requisite, that these Strangers must have come from a far Country; because, if they had been Natives of *Palestina*, they were involved in the general Sentence of Extirpation. But if they were the Inhabitants of other Countries, occasionally residing among the *Israelites*, *Moses* expressly enjoyns, that they should be treated with peculiar Tenderness and Regard. “ If, saith he, [Levit. xix, 33, 34] “ a Stranger sojourn with thee in your Land, ye shall not vex him. But the Stranger that dwelleth with you, shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were Strangers in the Land of *Egypt*.” Nay more, even an *Egyptian* was to remain among them, not only secure and unmolested, but in some Respect he was to be courted and caressed, with a View, as it should seem, that he might become a Convert. The Words of *Moses* are these: “ Thou shalt not abhor an *Edomite*, for he is thy Brother. Thou shalt not abhor an *Egyptian*, because thou wast a Stranger in his Land. The Children that are begotten of them, shall enter into the Congregation of the Lord, in their third Generation.” Deuter. xxiii. 7, 8. Moreover in other Places *Moses* gives Directions, that the Stranger, if in Want, should

should be relieved equally with the national Poor, the Fatherless and the Widow ;---all three being several Times for that Reason classed together. See particularly *Deuter. xiv. 29*, also *24, 17, 19, 20, 21, and 22 Verses.* And it is very remarkable, that all these Acts of Benevolence are enjoyned to be done in Favour of the Stranger, without requiring him to be *previously circumcised, or to make any open, express Renunciation of his former Idolatries :* So that provided he refrained from offering his Seed to *Molech* [*Levit. xx. 2*] [an immoral Action, and a cruel, unnatural Murder this ! which certainly ought to be restrained from being committed by the Civil Magistrate of every Country.] And provided also he did not * entice the *Israelites* to join with him in the Worship of his

* In order the more effectually to prevent the Stranger from enticing any of the Children of *Israel* into Idolatry, it was commanded, that *when Strangers were disposed to offer any Burnt-Offering or Sacrifice, they must first bring it to the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation*; doubtless as a Proof, that it was to be offered to the true God Jehovah, and to no other. But it doth not appear, that the Stranger was compellable to offer any Burnt-Offering or Sacrifice at all ; nay the contrary is very apparent from the 15th of *Numbers v. 14.* : Whereas the Children of *Israel* plainly were compellable. This Distinction is very remarkable. See *Levit. c. xvii.* and compare the first seven Verses with the 8th and 9th. Moreover all Strangers were forbid the Use of Blood ; and were to be subject to some legal Purifications ; lest their Touch might defile others in conversing with them.

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false Gods,---abstained from Blood,---and did not blaspheme the Name of the God of *Israel*, [Levit. xxiv. 16.] There is nothing to be found in the Books of *Moses*, which countenances the least Violence to be offered to his Person, or any Injury to his Property, on Account of his differing from them in religious Sentiments. In short, Liberty of Conscience, under the Regulations above mentioned, suffered no Infringement from any *express* Law of *Moses*;---it being very certain, that no Inquisition was authorised to be made concerning what a Stranger *privately* thought, or what he did, provided he conducted himself so as to give no *public* Offence or Scandal. The only Restriction put upon him was, that he should not partake of the Pascal Lamb at the Feast of the Passover, 'till he and his Males were first circumcised: A Restriction which carries no more Hardship or Persecution in it, than it would be among us, to debar a Man from partaking of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, 'till he had first entered into the Christian Covenant by Baptism.

---See *Exodus* xii. 43, 48.

3dly. THE CASE of the *Israelites* carrying on foreign Wars, that is, Wars beyond the District of the little Country of *Canaan*, is a further Proof that this Injunction to extirpate Idolatry was only local. For the Directions given by

Moses,

Moses, whenever such an Event should happen, plainly imply, that the *Israelites* were to tolerate the Idolaters of other Countries, even after these latter had submitted to their Power. His Words are these, *Deut. xx. 10, 11*, "When thou comest nigh unto a City to fight against it [a distant City, beyond the Confines of the promised Land] then proclaim Peace unto it;" ---which Offer of Peace was not to be made to any of the Cities of the seven devoted Nations of *Canaan*: See Verses 15, 16, 17, and 18.--- "And it shall be, if it make thee answer of Peace, and open unto thee; then it shall be, that all the People found there, shall be Tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee." Where observe, that not a Word is dropped about compelling them to forsake their Idol-Worship, and to conform to the Religion of the *Hebrews*; but only the obliging them to pay Tribute as a conquered People.

Add to this 4thly, That the Instance of the *Gibeonites*, who by Stratagem obtained the Favour of being treated by the *Israelites*, as a remote People, sending Embassadors to seek their Friendship, is a further Proof that *Joshua* and the *Israelites* themselves understood this Law for the Extirpation of Idolatry, as limited to the seven Nations only. For they would not extend it even to the *Gibeonites*, because the *Gibeonites* had

had made them believe, that they came from a far Country: And therefore when *Joshua* pronounced Sentence upon them, he did it in the Stile of a Conqueror, agreeably to what the Law of *Moses* had in that Case made and provided; without adding a single Word concerning the Necessity of their Conversion to the true Religion, or of their renouncing Idolatry. See *Joshua* ix. 3, 27. Yet surely it must be acknowledged, that as he had the Power of compelling them to submit to what Terms he pleased, he might have used Compulsion in such a Case as this, if Force was allowable in religious Matters.

WHEREFORE, 5thly. as the antient Inhabitants of *Canaan* were the only People devoted to Destruction on Account of their Idolatries;--- and as the *Israelites* were to be employed as the Instruments of Providence for this Purpose; ---it is but reasonable to suppose, that these *Israelites*, who were to inflict this exemplary Punishment on others, were to be subject themselves to the like Penalties. And such we find the Fact: For nothing can be more terrible, than the Threatenings which are denounced in various Places of the Books of *Moses* against apostatizing to Idolatry. But see more particularly the 13th Chapter of *Deuteronomy*; which treats altogether on this Subject. Nay, to speak

speak with Precision, and according to the Language of our Courts of Law, the Country itself was held by no other * Tenure, than that of the Inhabitants being faithful, and bearing true Allegiance to, their King Jehovah. So that, according to the Terms of such a Constitution, the Sin of Idolatry was Treason against the State: And the setting up of false Gods was an overt Act of Rebellion against their lawful Sovereign, the KING, as well as the God, of *Israel*.

Now laying all these Things together, the Conduct of *Elijah* in calling Fire to come down from Heaven to consume the Worshippers of *Baal*, will appear in a very different Light from what it would have done, had we not been previously made acquainted with these Facts and Circumstances. For the apostate Worshippers here mentioned were *Israelites* by Birth;---The Scene of Action was in the Land of *Canaan*, that very Country where the Sin of Apostacy and the

* The Circumstance, that the Land of *Canaan*, when possessed by the *Israelites*, was not to be considered as their Property, but as the sole Property of their King Jehovah, who was to grant them the Occupation or Usefrud thereof on certain Conditions, as his Tenants, is emphatically expressed in the 25th of *Leviticus* v. 23. "The Land shall not be sold for ever, (or for a longer Period than 49 Years) FOR THE LAND IS MINE; for ye are Strangers and Sojourners WITH ME.

Crime of Rebellion were one and the same Thing. Moreover the Idol, whom they worshipped, was *Baal*, the supposed God of the Sun, or of Fire. Therefore the Prophet, both to punish, and to confute their Idolatry by the same Act, and in order that others might be convinced, as well as terrified by their Example, made the very Element of Fire to be the Instrument of their Punishment.

THIS being the Case, surely, the Disciples of our Lord were most egregiously mistaken in alledging those Acts of *Elijah*, as a proper Precedent in our Saviour's Time. For in the first Place, the *Samaritans*, who refused to receive our Lord, because his Face was as though he would go to *Jerusalem*, could not be charged with Idolatry on any Pretence whatever; and therefore were not subject to the Penalties which *Moses* had denounced. 2dly, Supposing even that they had been Idol-Worshipers,---this Law requiring Idolatry to be punished with Death, had lost its Force, and had grown to be obsolete for several Ages past, like many other original Laws and Constitutions belonging to the Mosaic Dispensation. But 3dly, and above all, the Time was now come, when a new and a better Covenant was to take Place; a Covenant fitted for the Use and Circumstances of all Mankind; wherein therefore every Thing harsh and severe

was to be studiously avoided; instead whereof Forbearance and Benevolence were to be universally inculcated; and no Distinctions to be kept up between Kindreds and Countries for the future: *For the Son of Man did not come to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them.* Well then might our Lord upbraid those zealous but ignorant Men with that cutting Reproof,---*Ye know not what Spirit ye are of.*

P A R T II.

COME we now therefore to the Case of the Gospel itself: And seeing that every Part of the Christian World hath been found to adopt persecuting Measures in one Degree, or at one Time or other,---let us examine their respective Pretences, and then we shall the better judge of the Rectitude or Defensibility of such Proceedings. Now, if any Thing can be said in Favour of Persecution under the Gospel Dispensation, the Argument must be drawn either from those Examples which our Lord and his Apostles have proposed for our Imitation;---or from those Commands and Precepts, which they have prescribed for our Conduct;---or from the intrinsic Nature of Religion itself, especially the Christian;---or lastly from the absolute Necessities of Civil Government. Let us therefore examine each of these Topics in their Order.

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AND, 1st. as to those Examples which Christ and his Apostles have set for our Imitation. It is certainly our Duty to tread in their Steps wherever we can;—and more especially when we are engaged either in the Propagation of the Gospel, or the Preservation of its Purity. Here therefore let it be asked, what Advantage can the Advocates for Persecution derive from the Example of our Lord and his Apostles?—Did they persecute? No.—Did they *attempt* to persecute? No.—Did they recommend the Use of Persecution, as soon as the Christians should become the stronger Party? No; far, very far from it. However let us search this Matter to the Bottom. St. *Mark* assures us, and the other Evangelists in Effect confirm it, that when our Lord entered first upon his Ministry, after having been baptized of *John*, and after that *John* was put into Prison;—“He came into *Galilee*, preaching the Gospel (or the good News) of the Kingdom, and saying the Time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at Hand: *Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.*” Thus he began; and surely it must be allowed, that such Beginning is worthy of a Christian Cause; in which the only human Means made use of were Arguments and Persuasion. Let it therefore be further inquired, how did he proceed?—And what Means or Methods did he afterwards employ in the Propa-

gation of his Religion? All the sacred Historians of his Life and Actions concur in declaring, That he himself to the very last "went
 " about all the Cities and Villages (of *Judea*)
 " teaching in their Synagogues, and preaching
 " the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing
 " every Sicknes and every Disease among the
 " People:"---So that thus far at least his own
 Practice was altogether uniform and consistent.
 And as to those human Agents, whom he em-
 ployed first in his Life-time to the *Jews* only,
 and after his Resurrection to the *Gentiles* also;
 a Part of the Commission granted to the former
 ran in these Words:---" Go ye to the lost Sheep
 " of the House of *Israel*;---and as ye go,
 " preach, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is
 " at hand: Heal the Sick, cleanse the Lepers,
 " raise the Dead, cast out Devils, freely ye
 " have received, freely give:---Behold, I send
 " you forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves: Be
 " ye therefore *wise* as Serpents, and **HARMLESS**
 " as Doves." And when he came to extend this
 Commission of preaching the Gospel, or pub-
 lishing the good News of the Kingdom, to all
 Nations, as well as to the *Jews*; he gave not
 the least Intimation, that the *Harmlessness* of
 Doves was to be recalled, or was to become less
 necessary than heretofore. Nay, tho' he had
 but just declared, that all Power was given
 unto him in Heaven, and *in Earth*, yet in re-

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citing the general Commission, he never once insinuated, that now he would delegate a certain Portion of this *Earthly* Power to the Preachers of the Gospel, or indeed to any others, for the Purposes of obliging Men by Force to be *of*, or to continue *in*, his Religion. On the contrary, when Converts were to be made, they were to be made after the same laudable Manner of Instruction and Persuasion as heretofore. “ Go ye therefore, and teach (or “ instruct) all Nations, baptizing them in the “ Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of “ the Holy Ghost : Teaching them to observe “ all Things whatsoever I have commanded “ you ; and, lo, I am with you always even unto “ the End of the World.” Moreover to confirm this Argument, that Force was improper to be used in Matters of Religion, under any Pretence whatever, we have our Saviour’s own Comment on his own Actions, in two memorable Instances. The first occurs in the Case of the *Samaritans* mentioned in the Text. For these *Samaritans* were undoubtedly in a great Error ; (Salvation being of the *Jews*) and they had moreover personally offended our Lord and his Disciples by their Bigotry, in not receiving him, because his Face was as though he would go to *Jerusalem*. Yet when the Disciples *John* and *James* were for calling down Fire from Heaven to consume them, even as *Elias* did ; our

our Lord severely reprimanded their blind Zeal and unchristian Conduct ;---*Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of* ; that is, ye are Strangers, as yet, to the Spirit and Temper, the Scope and Design of my Religion : *For the Son of Man is not come to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them.* Again, when the Officers of the Chief Priests and Elders had seized our Lord, and when *Peter*, more zealous than wise, had attempted a Rescue, by smiting a Servant of the High Priest, and cutting off his right Ear ; our Lord rebuked *him* also for this improper Display of his Affection ; saying unto him, “ Put up again thy Sword into its Place, “ for all they that take the Sword, shall perish “ by the Sword.” And to convince him that he did not reprove him on this Occasion, merely on Account of the Rashness of the Attempt, or the Improbability of its Success, he adds likewise the following Words : “ Thinkest thou “ that I cannot now pray to my Father ; and “ he shall presently give us more than twelve “ Legions of Angels ?” So that if external Force were proper to be used, our Lord here declared, that he could have had recourse to that Method himself, without employing the Sword of *Peter*. Nay, as if it were on Purpose to cut off all Pretences for making Application to the secular Arm in future Times, he asserted before *Pilate* on his Trial, *That his Kingdom was*

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not of this World. Consequently, that Force and Terror (the usual, indeed the *necessary* Supports of other States and Empires) were unfit Instruments to be used either for the Advance-
ment, or for the Preservation of his Kingdom. Indeed he himself makes an Inference to the like Effect, by what he adds in the same Verse, ---“ If my Kingdom were of this World, then “ would my Servants fight that I should not be “ delivered to the Jews: But now is my King-
“ dom not from hence.”

OUR King therefore, and indeed the sole and only King of the Christian World, having thus expressly disclaimed the Use of human Force in the Administration of his Govern-
ment,---let us see in the next Place, how did his Commanders and his chief Officers behave, who received their Commission immediately from himself; I say, how did they act, and what Methods did they prosecute for defeating his Enemies, and for the Promotion and Prosperity of his Church, or visible Kingdom, here on Earth? *John* and *James*, we have seen already, before they were thoroughly instructed in the Christian Doctrines, were for calling down Fire from Heaven; and *Peter* was for using the Sword on a like Occasion: But when they had imbibed true and just Notions of their Master’s Plan, and saw the real Design and Tendency
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of the Gospel of Peace, What Methods did they *then* pursue? Just the very Reverse of those which they had pursued before: And whosoever will read over the *Acts* of the Apostles, with Care and Attention, will find, that *Peter* and *John*, and all the first Propagators of the Gospel had no Notion whatever, that it was lawful for them to have used Force and Compulsion in such a Cause.

ST. *Paul* likewise;---he was a Man naturally of strong Passions, and both a most zealous, and a most successful Preacher of the Gospel: Moreover he had been a Persecutor himself in a wrong Cause: Did he therefore, when he became a Convert, and an Apostle, think it reasonable and just to use Persecution in a right one? Far from it. For every Part of his Conduct, and every Relation which he gives of the Sufferings which he endured for the Sake of the Gospel, plainly shew, that he disapproved of Persecution in all Respects whatever.

HOWEVER, as this will lead us to consider 2dly, the *Commands* and *Precepts* of our Lord, and his Apostles, as well as their Example; we will therefore enter upon a Discussion of that Topic also.

Now it is observable, that tho' our Lord foretold many Things concerning the future

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State of his Church ; and, tho' he laid down many Rules for the Conduct of his Followers, when *suffering* Persecution, he did not utter a single Word, which could imply a Wish or Desire, much more a Command, that any hereafter, who called themselves by his Name, should retaliate, or inflict it on others. Nay, when he ascribes a Blessedness in his Sermon on the Mount to those, who should be persecuted for *Righteousness Sake*, he doth by a strong Implication evidently signify, that those who persecute, even for the Sake of true Religion, have not the like Beatitude to expect. “Blessed are “they, which are *persecuted* for *Righteousness Sake*; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

UNDER this Head we may further add the Rules and Directions given by St. *Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*. These Men had been appointed by him to be the Bishops of the Church of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God, not only during his Absence, but after his Decease. And he foretells the several Calamities and Disasters, which would afflict the Church in future Times; more especially he forewarns them to expect a great falling off from the Truths of the Gospel. Nay, he instructs them, what Courses to take, and what they are to do, when such Events shall happen: “They are to take heed to themselves, and

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" unto their Doctrine, and *antivise* in them.
 " They are to follow after Righteousness, God-
 " lines, Faith, Love, Patience, and Meek-
 " ness: They are to preach the Word, be in-
 " stant in Season, out of Season, to reprove,
 " rebuke, exhort with all long Suffering and
 " Doctrine." And from several Passages in St.
 Paul's Writings, as well as from the Nature of
 the Case, we may farther infer, that the Go-
 vernors of the Church were to inflict Ecclesiasti-
 cal Censures, so far as to exhort the faithful to
 avoid all false Seducers; and to declare such
 Persons, when incorrigible, to be separated and
 cut off from the Communion of the Faithful.
 That is, in short, they were to exercise those
 Rights, when necessary, which belong to
 Christians in common with every other Society
 upon Earth, and without which no Society can
 subsist; the Rights of Exclusion, as well as of
 Admission. Thus far therefore the Governors
 of the Church were, not only authorised, but
 exhorted to proceed; but no farther; never-
 pafs this Barrier: Wherein you will observe
 that there is not the least Intimation given about
 Pains or Penalties, Fines or Imprisonments, or
 any other Methods of Persecution.

MUCH the same Observations might be made
 were it necessary to make them, on what the
 other Promulgators of the Gospel, St. Peter

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St. James, St. Jude, and St. John have said on the same Subject. Suffice it therefore to observe in general, and once for all, that the Doctrine of Persecution is not once recommended in the Books of the New Testament. And if we expect to find it, we must look for it somewhere else, than in these Oracles of the living God.

THUS far we have proceeded in our Proofs, that neither our Lord nor his Apostles gave any Directions, or left any Commands behind them for using Persecution in the Affairs of Religion. And tho' one would think, that the bare Want of a Commission in this Case was sufficient to deter the most fiery Zealot from pretending to have one;--yet we need not rest the important Cause of universal Toleration on *negative Proofs* only: For we have our Lord's express and positive Injunctions to abstain from persecuting Measures under any religious Pretence whatever. Nay, the Case which he states to illustrate this Point, would have served the best of any to have justified the Use of Persecution;--if it could have been justified at all. For the Similitude which he uses in St. Matthew's Gospel, Chap. 13. is that of the Wheat and the Tares. He himself had sowed the purest Wheat; but an Enemy, the Devil, sowed Tares also in the same Field. By these

Means it came to pass, that the good and the bad Seed were intermingled, and grew up together. Now it appears from the Context, and indeed from the Nature of the Case, that it was no injudicious Course of Husbandry to weed the Corn, and to gather up the Tares. But nevertheless this Method of Agriculture, however proper in other Cases, was to be laid aside in the Cultivation of the Field of the Gospel, and a quite contrary one to take Place. “ Let both the Wheat and the Tares grow together until Harvest, and in the Time of Harvest I will say to the Reapers, Gather ye together first the Tares, and bind them in Bundles to burn them; but gather the Wheat into my Barn.” Now, if any Person will still be so over zealous as to ask, Why is the gathering of the Tares into Bundles, in order to be burnt, to be delayed until the Time of Harvest? --- And why are not the Servants ordered forthwith to root out these noxious Weeds, and destroy them? Our Saviour himself has given a Reason in his Reply, *Leave while ye gather up the Tares, YE ROOT UP ALSO THE WHEAT WITH THEM.*

WHAT then can we say to these Things? The Language of the New Testament is so far from warranting, that it expressly forbids us to have Recourse to Persecution.

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Shall we then hope to find it in the Nature and Constitution of Religion itself? Or at least shall we imagine it to be so interwoven with Religion, that we cannot part them asunder; that we cannot separate one from the other? A strange Conceit surely, that Religion and Persecution must necessarily be blended; yet strange as it is, some have been weak enough to imagine, that Things so opposite and repugnant to each other must be incorporated together.

LET us therefore examine 3dly, in what Instance, or in what Sense it is possible to suppose, That Religion can authorise the Use of Force or Compulsion.

Now one essential Ingredient in the Composition of all Religions, and of every Religion is, a sincere Persuasion of the Truth of it; i. e. I must *inwardly* believe that which I *outwardly* profess; otherwise I am an *Unbeliever*, and have no Religion at all,---at least as far as relates to the Point in Question, whatever it may happen to be. Here therefore lies a Difficulty, which calls aloud on the Advocates for Persecution to solve if they are able. Doth ~~not~~ Perfection carry any Conviction along with it? And am I the more disposed to believe a Thing, because I am beaten, or threatened to be beaten, to be fined or imprisoned for not believing it?—

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Let the common Sense of Mankind decide this Question ; and let the Experience of all Ages determine the Point, Whether such a Method is not more calculated to make Men *Hypocrites*, than to make them *Converts*? Now Hypocrisy, we know on every Principle, is an Abomination in the Sight of God ; and this must be wrong, whether the Religion, which the Hypocrite professes, be true or false in itself. Therefore if Persecution has no natural and just Tendency to work Conviction, but rather the contrary ; and if there can be no Religion at all without Conviction ;---the Inference is undeniable, that Religion and Persecution can have no Affinity to, no Alliance, no Connection with each other.

BESIDES, if all our Doings without Charity are nothing worth ; and if Faith, or Conviction itself is of no Avail, unless it worketh by Love, ---doth Persecution promote Charity ? Doth it beget Love ?---Surely no : And both the *Persecutors* and the *Persecuted* are the most unlikely of all Men living, to be in Christian Love and Charity with each other.

NAY more, granting, if you please, that some Good may accidentally and occasionally arise from this Evil of Persecution, as from all other Evils natural or moral :---Granting, that it may be a Means of preventing the Conta-

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gion of Pestilential Doctrines, by nipping Heresies in the Bud ;---and to go still farther ; granting that this Suppression of Heresy was to be the very Thing, the only Thing, intended ; yet what Conclusion would you draw from these Concessions ?---Would you say, that the End will sanctify the Means ? Would you do Evil, that Good might come ? God forbid. For by the very same Rule the greatest Immoralities, and the most horrid Crimes that can be committed, might be justified, might be sanctified on certain Occasions.

UPON the whole, therefore, if this be the Case with respect to Religion, let us consider in the 4th and last Place, how Matters stand in Reference to Civil Government.

Men in a State of Nature are their own Governors,---their own Protectors,---and the Avengers of their own Wrongs ; but when they enter into Society, they must part with these Rights by making a general Deposit of them into the Hands of the Magistrate ;---from whom they receive others in Exchange, by Virtue of of which they become great Gainers. That is to say, they derive from him, or from the *united* Strength of the Society operating thro' his Means, much greater Protection, Advantage, and Prosperity, than any Individual could possibly

sibly have procured to himself in his single, solitary, independent State. If therefore a Surrender of Rights is to be made upon entering into Society, the Question is, What Rights are to be surrendered? --- Or in other Words, what Powers is the Man to resign and give up? And which is he still to retain? To which Question the Answer undoubtedly ought to be, That he should give up those Rights, which could be better and more advantageously managed for his own, and for the general Good by the Magistrate, than by himself; but should still retain all others, which belong properly and immediately to his own Person. He ought not, for Instance, to give up the Right of Eating and Drinking; --- Indeed he cannot, because these are personal Things, where no Substitute can officiate for him; and for the same Reason he ought not to surrender to any one his Right of thinking and judging for himself in the Affairs of Religion; because this likewise is a personal Thing between God and his own Conscience; and he can neither be saved nor damned by Proxy.

HERE therefore it is evident, that Civil Government has no Right to interfere; --- any otherwise, I mean, than by way of Charity and Persuasion, and by Virtue of Free-Gifts, Bounties, and Encouragements: --- Which are Methods

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that any private Individual has as clear a Right to make use of, if he pleases, as the public Magistrate. But the latter has no Right, any more than the former, to inflict Punishments, great or small: He ought not to fine, or imprison, much less to torture or to burn those who happen to differ from him in religious Sentiments; for, provided that the Man, who scruples to conform to his Religion, doth not disturb the public Peace, or endanger the Safety of the State, he ought not to molest him in the peaceable and quiet Worship of God after his own Way. This is a general Rule, applicable to all States and Countries, and to all Establishments Civil or Religious, throughout the Face of the Earth. And would to God it were more attended to, better understood, and universally practiced?--In short, Liberty of Conscience, where no Principles are held, and no Practices attempted inconsistent with the Safety of Civil Society, is the universal Birth-right of all Mankind. And even as to those Disputes and Controversies, which may arise from Time to Time among the contending Parties, the less the Magistrate interferes, (any otherwise than by preserving Peace, and by preventing the Combatants from worrying and devouring one another)--the sooner will the Zealots on both Sides come to a right Understanding, and make the Discovery of their

own Accord, that the Busines of Religion is
not to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them.

IN one Word, many a State and Kingdom [^{*this Kingdom of} *England* in particular] has been shaken, been convulsed, and perhaps at last quite overturned for want of granting a timely Indulgence to tender Consciences. But there is not an Instance to be produced in the Annals of the World, of any State having been weakened, much less destroyed, by annexing a general and universal Toleration to the civil Establishment of Religion.

• It is evident at this Day, even to a Demonstration, that had that unhappy, ill-advised Monarch *Charles the First*, and his furious Church Counsellors, *Laud*, *Montagu*, and others, made any tolerable and *timely* Concessions, with a *goad Grace*,--the whole Sect of *Puritans* would have split to Pieces, would have dwindled away, and become contemptible. But Persecution united them firmly together; Persecution caused all Men to pity them, and to interest themselves deeply in their Cause and Sufferings; and lastly, it was nothing but Persecution (for there was *no other Connection*) which formed an Alliance between the *Puritans* and the Patriots of those Times, that soon became so formidable, as to carry every Thing before it, and to effect the Ruin both of Church and State. At last *Charles* saw his Error, and offered to make very great,--perhaps too great,--Alterations in the Forms and Liturgy of the established Church. But, alack! his Offers then came too late: The Time of conferring Obligations was at an End, and as such Concessions were no longer considered as Matters of Favour, but the Consequence of Victory, therefore the *Conquerors* would not accept of Conditions from the *Conquered*, but would prescribe Terms of their own, and then in their Turn, that *they were now the Masters*.—*Verbum sapienti.*

THE Inference from all this is plain and cogent: The Religion of the Gospel is a Religion of Peace and Love; and those, who think otherwise, know not what Manner of Spirit they are of. Sound Policy, and a Regard for the Interest both of Church and State, all unite in this Point: And to crown all, we have no other Method of proving, that we love God, than by first demonstrating, that we love one another. For he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen [and surely it will be difficult to persuade the World, that he who would persecute his Brother, is much in Love with him] how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? This Command therefore have we from above, That he who loveth God, love his Brother also.



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THREE Things are principally objected to the above State of the Case, and Train of Reasoning.

First, IT is said, That Strangers sojourning in any of the Coasts of *Israel*, were obliged to renounce their former Idolatries, by being obliged to observe the seven Precepts of *Noah*; the first of which forbids the Worship of any false God.

Secondly, THAT the Law against Blasphemy was in Effect a Law against Idolatry; inasmuch as every Idolater is a Blasphemer in the highest Degree.

AND, 3dly. That our Saviour himself in the New Testament countenances the Use of external Force for promoting the Cause of true Religion, by that memorable Expression in the Parable of the Marriage Feast, *Compel them to come in.*

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LET us examine each of these Objections in their Order.

AND, 1st. As to those seven Precepts of *Noah*, which it is asserted, that all Strangers sojourning in the Land of *Israel* were bound to observe. This indeed is asserted: But where is it proved? *Moses* no where makes mention of a Catalogue of seven Precepts given by *Noah*; much less doth he make such a precise Number of Laws to be the Terms or Conditions to be required of *uncircumcised* Strangers for Permission to sojourn among the *Israelites*: Nor do the Books of *Joshuah*, *Samuel*, or *Kings* once refer to any such *fundamental* Articles or Stipulations; therefore the Conclusion is obvious, that this supposed Catalogue of seven Precepts had no Existence in those Days; but was the Conceit and Invention of after Ages. The great * *Selden*, I do allow, is willing to maintain the contrary; but as great a Man in the same Kind of Learning, * *Basnage*, in his celebrated History of the *Jews*, peremptorily declares, that it was the (later) *Jews*, who imagined or invented this Catalogue of Precepts, in Conformity to the Spirit of their Religion, which was so severe against Idolatry. Now

* *Seldenus de Jure naturali et Gentium.* Lib. 2. c. 3.
† *Basnage L'Histoire des Juifs.* Liv. 4. §. 2.

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the Dispute between these learned Men might easily have been terminated, if it could have been shewn from any of the Books of the Old Testament, that there were actually such a Number of Precepts given by *Noah*, as here supposed; and that they were applied for the above-mentioned Purposes: But if this Point is given up, and the Proofs are to be drawn only from *Talmuds*, and the Writings of the *Rabbies*, such Proofs, tho' alledged by *Selden* himself, cannot be allowed to be conclusive.

THE only Place, as I apprehend, where mention is at all made of Strangers, for the Purposes of religious Worship, is to be found in the 1st of *Kings*, Chap. viii. 42, 43. There *Solomon*, at the Dedication of the Temple, after having prayed for the Children of *Israel*, interceas also in Behalf of Strangers, in the following Words:

“ **M**OREOVER concerning a Stranger, that is “ not of thy People *Israel*, but cometh out of a “ far Country, for thy Name’s Sake (for they “ shall hear of thy great Name, and of thy “ strong Hand, and of thy stretched out Arm) “ when he shall come and pray towards this “ House [N. B. In the Book of *Chronicles*, the Words are, If they come, and pray] “ Hear “ thou in Heaven thy Dwelling Place, and “ do

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“ do according to all that the Stranger calleth
 “ to thee for ; that all People of the Earth
 “ may know thy Name to fear thee, as do thy
 “ People *Israel* : And that they may know,
 “ that this House, which I have builded, is
 “ called by thy Name.”

Now from these Words, I presume, it may be fairly gathered, That if the Stranger should come from a far Country to worship the great God Jehovah in his Temple at *Jerusalem*, he was to be received with open Arms, and to be entitled to all Kind of Protection from the State : But surely it cannot be gathered, that either the Stranger from a far Country, or the Stranger occasionally sojourning in the Land was *compellable* to worship the God of *Israel* by this or any other divine Law then in being (see particularly *Numbers xv. 14*). Much less can it be inferred, that an Inquisition was to be made into the private Sentiments of any Stranger, provided his outward Deportment was such as to give no public Offence or Scandal.

THE 2d Objection is, That the Law against Blasphemy was in Effect a Law against Idolatry ; because every Idolater is necessarily a Blasphemer.

Now the Force of this Objection will turn on the right Understanding of what was Idolatry, and

and what was Blasphemy, according to the Sense of Scripture. Idolatry in the Scripture Sense was either the Worshipping of a Plurality of Gods, whether with or without Resemblances of them; which was the Sin forbidden by the first Commandment:—Or else the Worship of the true God himself under some visible Shape or corporeal Representation, which was the particular Crime condemned by the second Commandment. And Blasphemy was the SPEAKING *reproachfully* or *contumeliously* of the great *Jehovah*, the God of *Israel*. Now from these Definitions, which are entirely scriptural, it is evident at first Sight, that the Terms are not convertible. A Man may be an Idolater, and yet be no Blasphemer;—or be a Blasphemer, and no Idolater. But the Occasion on which the Law itself against Blasphemy was made, will give a further Insight into this Matter.

We read in the 24th of *Levit.* v. 10, 16, that one of that mixed Multitude, which joined themselves to the Children of *Israel* at their Departure out of *Egypt* (see *Exodus* xii. 38.)—I say, one of this mixed Breed, whose Father was an *Egyptian*, and his Mother an *Israelite*, had a Quarrel with a native *Israelite* in the Camp. The Subject or Ground of their Contention is not mentioned. But from certain Circumstances it is not difficult to guess the real Cause. In

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the Book of *Numbers* ch. 1. v. 52, we find the following Order given concerning encamping: "The Children of *Israel* shall pitch their Tents every Man by his own Camp, and every Man by his own Standard throughout their Hosts." And it is observed at the 34th Verse of the next Chapter, that the Children of *Israel* regulated both their Encampings and their Marches according to this Order. For "They pitched [their Tents] by their Standards, and they set forwards [in their Marches] every one after their Families, according to the House of their Fathers." Now, whether this Regulation was made in Consequence of the Disturbance above-mentioned, or whether it was prior to it, is not said; most probably it was in Consequence of it. But it appears sufficiently plain, and in this the best Commentators all agree, that the Contest was about Precedency in pitching their Tents. The Son of the *Egyptian*, whose Mother was a *Danite*, thought perhaps that he had as good a Right to the Post of Honour as any in the House of *Dan*;---which a true-born *Israelite* would not allow; hence arose Strife and Contention. And as that Spot was considered as the most honourable, which lay nearest to the Royal Palace, the Tabernacle of the Congregation, where the King *Jehovah* resided by a *Shekinah*, or visible Presence; therefore it is very probable, that when

this angry, passionate Man found himself degraded (as he imagined) he vented his Reproaches not only against the Subjects of the King of *Israel*, but against the King himself, in whose Cause they acted. This, I say, is a very probable Supposition; nay, a certain Fact it is, that he spake reproachfully of the great *Jehovah*: For he *blasphemed the Name of the Lord, and cursed*. In consequence of which, the Law against Blasphemy was enacted, *Levit. xxiv. V. 15, and 16*, "And thou [Moses] shalt speak unto the Children of *Israel*, saying, *Whosoever curseth his God, shall bear his Sin. And he that blasphemeth the Name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to Death, and all the Congregation shall certainly stone him: As well the Stranger, as he that is born in the Land, when he blasphemeth the Name of the Lord, shall be put to Death.*"

LANGUAGE cannot make the Case plainer than it hath here done, that the Sin of Blasphemy must consist of *Words* spoken reproachfully or contumeliously against God. And therefore it necessarily follows, that where no Words are uttered, there no Blasphemy can be committed;---at least in such a Sense as to be cognizable by this Law. But if it could be supposed, that some Proof was still wanting to confirm this Observation; it might be farther urged,

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urged, that the original Root, Nakab, which is thrice rendered in this Passage *blasphemed*,---*blasphemeth*,---and *when he blasphemeth*, or *in blaspheming*,---literally signifies to *name*; and may be taken both in a good, or a bad Sense, according to the Context. Therefore *Arius Montanus*, in his literal Version, renders the Words *nuncupavit*,---*nuncupans*,---*in nuncupando*. Nay, the Rabbies were so sensible, that this was the literal Signification of the Term, that they fancied this Man's Blasphemy to have consisted in his naming or *pronouncing* the four-lettered sacred Name *Jehovah*, which was not lawful for any one to pronounce by audible vocal Sounds. A strange Conceit undoubtedly! And yet even this may suffice to prove, that according to their Opinion, a Word or Words must be pronounced, before Blasphemy could be committed.---Though therefore little Credit is to be given to *Jewish* Rabbies, as *Commentators*;---yet as far as the literal Interpretation of the Language can extend, so far we may allow them to be no bad Judges.

HOWEVER, let us for a Moment suppose that Blasphemy might be committed by irreverent and irreligious Thoughts, or by immoral Acts, as well as by *Words*; and then mark what must be the Consequence. Then it would follow,

that every wilful and deliberate Sin is in Effect Blasphemy against God; because it denotes a practical Denial of his Omnipotence, his Omnipotence, or the Rectitude of his moral Government. The not acknowledging of either of which Attributes amounts, by a Construction and Implication, to a Denial of the Existence of God himself in a practical and religious Sense. In short, if this be the Case, the Sin of Blasphemy is the most common Thing in the World; and the whole Race of Mankind, Jews and Gentiles, Believers in Christ and Unbelievers, are all *Blasphemers before God*. But surely this cannot be a just and right Method of interpreting any Laws, human or divine,---more especially those of the *penal Kind*: And therefore, if it may be said in a metaphorical Sense (indeed the Scriptures do say it) that a covetous Man is an Idolater, and that Covetousness is Idolatry,---yet, surely, no Man will be so absurd as to infer from hence, that metaphorical Idolatry is legal, literal, and real Blasphemy.

BUT we have not yet done with *metaphorical Objections*; for it is asserted,

3dly, THAT Christ himself gave Countenance to the Application of Force for the Purposes of serving true Religion, by using that

memorable *Expression* in the Parable of the Marriage Feast, *Compel them to come in.* (See Luke xiv. 23.)

INDEED this Expression is become *memorable*, and *more memorable* than others equally deserving to be remembered, not by Virtue of its own intrinsic Worth, but because the Advocates for Persecution weakly fancied, that they could adopt it to favour their own Cause: For had the Expression been, *press* or *importune* them to come in, which is the real Sense of the Words, it would have been as little regarded, as those other Words of Scripture, which were evidently and expressly intended for the Regulation of our Conduct, *viz.* *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye unto them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.* But to come closer to the Point: St. Matthew, in reciting the same Parable, and referring to the very same Sort of Guests (Chap. xxii. Verse 9) uses the Term *καλεσθε*, that is, *bid*, *call*, or *invite* them to the Marriage Feast: And even St. Luke, in this very 14th Chapter, employs the same Term *καλεω* either as a Verb, a Participle, or as a compound Verb, no less than *eleven* Times on the *same* Occasion, before he changes it for the Word *αναγκαστον* *compel*: Nay once he uses it afterwards. What therefore can we infer, but that
there

there was no more Violence or external Force to be exerted in this single Case, by those whose Office it was to invite, than in the 12 other Cases: Nay, indeed, why should there be more? For if all the other intended Guests were only invited to the Marriage Feast, and left to their own free Choice either to accept, or to refuse, the Invitation (which we find by *Facts*, as well as by *Words* to have been the real State of the Case) why should these alone be subject to harsher Treatment than the rest? Why, I say, should the Poor, the Maimed, the Halt, the Blind, and all the lower Classes of People be frightened, harrassed, and dragooned into the Church, (the very Method of Conversion used by the Grand Monarch towards the poor Protestants of *France*) whereas the Rich, the Great, and the higher Orders were only to be entreated?— There is something so silly in this Objection, as well as wicked in the Design of making it, that it shocks the common Sense and common Honesty of all Mankind.

THE Upshot of the whole is this: Reason and persuade, intreat and importune as much as you can: Preach the Word; be instant in Season, out of Season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-suffering and Doctrine: But use no Violence; and be content with those

those
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those Methods of propagating and preserving
the Gospel of Christ, which he himself both
prescribed and practiced. The Wrath of Man
worketh not the Righteousness of God.

F I N I S.



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